



at sea with idioms

THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER FISH IN THE SEA—There are other people to choose.

After Bob's fiancée broke off their engagement, his friends tried to console him saying there were plenty of other fish in the sea.

FISHY—suspicious or unlikely
His account of the accident is fishy. We have to get some other witnesses.

FISH OR CUT BAIT—either do the job or let someone else do it
I was frustrated by Fred's lack of commitment to the project so I told him to fish or cut bait.

BE A COLD FISH—be aloof and unfeeling; unsociable
Though John is a real cold fish, his wife is quite charming.

A FINE KETTLE OF FISH—a real mess; a big problem
With guests coming in one hour and our plumbing broken, we've got a fine kettle of fish.

LIKE A FISH OUT OF WATER—in a strange environment; uncomfortable or awkward
Since leaving New York City to live in a small town, Bill has been like a fish out of water.

FISH FOR A COMPLIMENT—try to get someone to say something nice about you
From the way he kept bringing the conversation back to his performance, it seemed clear that he was fishing for a compliment.

HAVE OTHER FISH TO FRY—have other opportunities
Though he didn't get the job he wanted, he had other fish to fry and was not about to give up.

NEITHER FISH NOR FOWL—not recognizable; not fitting into normal categories
The report he submitted was neither fish nor fowl so I asked him to do a rewrite.

SWIM AGAINST THE TIDE—do the opposite; go against popular opinion
In taking so independent a position, the senator was swimming against the tide.

GREEN AROUND THE GILLS—looking sick or unwell
A bad case of the flu had left her green around the gills.

IN THE SWIM OF THINGS—participating in activities; involved
After a difficult start at the university, Mack got in the swim of things, and is doing well in his studies and having a good time.

SINK OR SWIM—failing or succeeding
The university entrance exam is a sink or swim proposition.

SWALLOW SOMETHING HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER—believe something completely; be tricked
The inexperienced new instructor swallowed his student's excuse hook, line, and sinker.

MAKE WAVES—disturb or agitate
I know the group doesn't want to reconsider the question so I won't bring it up again. I don't want to make waves.

AS HAPPY AS A CLAM—completely contented; totally satisfied
Mary's been as happy as a clam since she changed jobs.

RED AS A LOBSTER—badly sunburned
After a day at the beach, we were all as red as a lobster.

CLAM UP—refuse to talk
When we asked her what had been discussed at the committee meeting, she clammed up saying she was not at liberty to say.

SLIPPERY AS AN EEL—untrustworthy; tricky
You have to watch that employee; she's as slippery as an eel.

THE WORLD IS HER (any possessive pronoun) OYSTER—The world is ready to yield success to someone. Someone will have great opportunities.
After graduating at the top of her class from medical school, the world is her oyster.

PACKED LIKE SARDINES—very crowded; no extra space available
During rush hour, the subway is so full that the people are packed like sardines.

A WHALE OF (something)—something that is very impressive and positive
With good food, good friends, good music, it is not surprising that everyone had a whale of a time at the party.

AN OCTOPUS—an organization with many branches or subsidiaries exercising far-reaching influence
That multinational corporation is a real octopus! It controls the market for audio equipment on three continents.

IN DEEP WATER—in a dangerous situation; in trouble
John was in deep water once the lawyers began to investigate his bank accounts and his past tax records.

THROUGH HELL AND HIGH WATER—during difficult circumstances
Casey stayed with the company through hell and high water for forty years.

DRINK LIKE A FISH—drink alcohol to excessive amounts
Dave was drinking like a fish at the party so his friends called a taxi to get him home.

STILL WATER RUNS DEEP—Quiet people think deep thoughts.
Anne seldom spoke up, but when she did, her ideas were great! She's clear evidence that still waters run deep.

BETWEEN THE DEVIL AND THE DEEP BLUE SEA—in a difficult position involving choice
I cannot decide which offer to take. I'm between the devil and the deep blue sea.

POUR OIL ON TROUBLED WATER—calm things down
Mary poured oil on troubled water by suggesting that a subcommittee be set up to study the problem.

AT SEA (about something)—be lost or confused
People who excel in the study of foreign languages are frequently at sea when it comes to math and science.

SHARK—a ruthless or dishonest person
Think carefully before going into partnership with Ed. He is a real shark.